

Workers and youth in Germany support call for International Workers Alliance and mobilise for ICFI May Day online rally

Our reporters
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Workers and youth from across Germany tell the WSWs why they support the International Committee of the Fourth International's call for the formation of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees and will be attending tomorrow's May Day rally of the ICFI. We call on our readers to register here for this important event.

Habip Bektas is one of the WISAG workers at Rhein-Main Airport in Frankfurt who have been fighting their dismissals for almost half a year. In December, the experienced airport worker received his dismissal along with a total of around 230 other colleagues, some of whom had spent almost 40 years at the airport, ruining their health while handling the planes.

Habip was a loadmaster on the apron and sent a video in which he reports on the struggle of the WISAG workers and speaks out in favour of the International Workers' Alliance. Habip and his colleagues have founded an independent committee to organise the struggle, "so that we workers can fight together as a working-class, independent of any trade unions". Because "Verdi has let us down." He advocates the formation of more independent action committees "so that workers can unite and finally fight against these capitalists."

Many workers and youth welcome the International Workers Alliance as a necessary step to stop the government's murderous policy of reopening society amid a pandemic that has already claimed more than 82,000 lives in Germany alone.

Tamino, aged 17, who is setting up a student action committee in Baden-Wuerttemberg, explains in a video statement: "Here in Germany, too, all governments—whether nominally left-wing or openly

right-wing—are opening up schools again, endangering the health and lives of students, teachers and relatives. Up to an incidence rate of 165, all grades here must continue to go to school."

This, he said, was "more than three times the level recommended by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for school closures". Up to 30 households must "sit together in one room and even simple and necessary protective measures, such as 'keeping your distance' and 'changing masks regularly'" were not possible. Since the Easter holidays alone, he has heard of two people testing positive at his school.

Tamino's conclusion: "Because the ruling class will not voluntarily ensure a real lockdown, workers and youth have to fight for it themselves. For this, they need their own fighting organisations in the form of an international alliance of action committees like the ICFI proposes. And it is for this perspective that I am participating in the ICFI's May Day."

Clemens, aged 18, from Bavaria, who like Tamino is a member of the IYSSE, expresses a similar view. "One year after the beginning of the pandemic, all capitalist parties here in Germany, but also internationally, have proven they have no interest whatsoever in ending the deaths. Only the ICFI has stood up for a socialist programme since the beginning of the pandemic, to unite the working class, overthrow the capitalist system and thus end the dying. That is why I am attending the May Day Rally of the International Committee because it calls for the formation of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. Because only through the international unification of the working class across all borders and prejudices, can the capitalist system be

overthrown and the dying ended.”

In a video, Tino, an emergency paramedic from Chemnitz, describes the terrible effects of the coronavirus pandemic, especially in the health sector. “Although we are used to hard working conditions and poor pay, and were already confronted with death and misery before, the pandemic has made everything worse.” Between Christmas and New Year, he said, things were at their worst. “Almost every emergency call was Covid-19 related. It was almost impossible to find a free hospital bed. Nursing homes turned into death traps, and we were rubbing shoulders with undertakers.” He had seen “weeping caregivers desperately asking, ‘When is this going to stop?!’” Meanwhile, a total of “three million people worldwide have already fallen victim to the pandemic and many of those who survived the infection are struggling with long-term effects.” At the same time, in the year of the pandemic, arms spending exploded, and the fortunes of billionaires continued to rise. The video ends with a strong appeal to attend the May Day rally and build the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. Only in this way could workers “fight for their interests worldwide”.

Philipp, who is 35 and works at Hamburg airport, sent us this video statement. He said, “When the pandemic started last year, I was able to watch how operations were maintained for months as if this pandemic did not exist. There were no [safety] measures in place and there are inadequate measures in place today. Only belatedly were masks and protective screens distributed and operations are still maintained as best they can to generate profits. To take meaningful measures, action committees must be created that are internationally coordinated. This worldwide pandemic cannot be stopped on a national basis. The global pursuit of profit over life must be opposed. That is why it is so important for workers to network worldwide. That is why I support the alliance of all action committees. Take care and stay healthy. See you at the May Day event.”

Timo, aged 39, is also from Hamburg and works for a coronavirus hotline. He supports the call for an International Workers Alliance. His work gives him “a good insight into the vaccination situation”. There was still “too little vaccine for everyone” and many had to “wait for months”. Vaccine distribution was “chaotic

here and internationally and still only a small part of the world’s population is vaccinated.” The problem, he said, was in the system. “Capitalist competition prevents a globally coordinated response to the pandemic. The basis is the constant pursuit of profit by corporations.” To fight the pandemic effectively, “all workers would have to unite internationally.”

Inessa, aged 17, is a vocational student from Berlin. She endorses the building of the International Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees “because the struggle against the pandemic, against war and the shift to the right, against inequality and the exploitation of the working class requires a common struggle against the whole capitalist social order. There are so many of us, worldwide, who can no longer and will no longer accept the profits-before-lives policy. To do this, we need to break our isolation, organise independently, and unite globally. That is why I support the May Day event of the International Committee of the Fourth International.”

Another video reached us from Ekin, a 33 year-old bus driver in Berlin and member of the Transport Workers’ Action Committee for Safe Workplaces. “The aim and purpose of the workers’ committee,” he said, was “to be independent of the unions and to reorganise ourselves”. The trade unions worldwide were “only on the side of the employer and not on the side of the worker”. Similar committees had therefore already been formed in other German and European cities, in Brazil and the US. The current struggle by bus drivers in Berlin against unsafe working conditions in the pandemic showed the strength of the independent mobilisation of the working class, he said. “The Berlin transport companies wanted to restore boarding through the front entrance and cashless ticketing on May 3. We fought against that. And the BVG [local transit company] postponed front entry,” he reports. “It’s the beginning, but as Marx said: workers, proletarians of all countries unite!”



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